

ANNUAL REPORT
of the
MISSISSIPPI
SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

TO THE GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE

FOR THE YEAR

July 1, 1968 - June 30, 1969

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MAIL ROOM

HISTORY OF THE MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

The Mississippi Institute for the Blind was established by the Mississippi Legislature in 1848, Chapter 47, page 153, and was located on North Jefferson Street in Jackson, Mississippi. The name was later changed to the Mississippi School for the Blind. The School remained on Jefferson Street until the session of 1864-65, when it was moved to Monticello, Mississippi, during the latter part of the Civil War. It was moved back to North Jefferson Street after the War and continued to operate at this location until 1882, when a new school was constructed on North State Street on fourteen acres of land purchased by the trustees of the School for the Blind from a gift of William C. Johnson. The School remained at North State Street until 1951 when a modern school plant was constructed on Highway 51 North at Eastover Drive for the blind white children. Until this time the blind Negro children had been in school at Piney Woods Farm Life School. They were transferred to a new Negro School for the Blind on Capers and Green Streets in West Jackson.

From 1932 to 1936, the Mississippi School for the Blind was operated by the Board of Eleemosynary Institutions. In 1936, the Legislature enacted a law which empowered the Governor to appoint a three-member Board to operate the schools for the blind and the deaf. In 1944, the Mississippi Legislature recognized the School for the Blind and the School for the Deaf, and made provisions for a Board of seven members to be appointed by the Governor for periods of one to seven years, and then to appoint one member each year thereafter to serve a full seven-year term.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Mississippi School for the Blind is an educational institution operated by the state for visually handicapped, which is designed to give good academic training to children of school age whose parents or legal guardians are residents of the state of Mississippi. The school provides varied and comprehensive vocational, recreational and physical education programs, as well as many extracurricular activities which help the students prepare for living in a sighted world.

The State Accrediting Commission has given both the elementary and high school departments an "A" rating. Subject matter in the course of study is parallel and very similar to that given in any accredited public school, including such electives as music, voice, instrumental work, crafts, typewriting, homemaking and industrial arts. Woodworking, piano tuning and repair, and chair caning are an additional part of the vocational training program for boys. Specialized procedures and techniques, such as the use of Grade II Braille, combined with special equipment, which includes talking book machines, Braille maps, Braille writers, Sight Saving (large print) textbooks, slates and styluses, are utilized in teaching the blind.

The school must provide not only for the education of the pupils, but must also be responsible for their feeding, household, and medical care, and general well-being twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, nine months a

year. Daily programs are arranged to coordinate school activities with outside activities; and every effort is made to assure a home-like atmosphere and to provide adequate recreation, including excursions, picnics, movies, athletic events, and cultural entertainments. The churches assist in fulfilling spiritual needs of the children by including them in numerous church-sponsored events in addition to Sunday School and Church.

Such a thorough program demands qualified personnel in all areas. All teachers must be certified, approved by the Board of Trustees, and genuinely interested in working with these handicapped students. Houseparents are selected with equal care since they are responsible for the children outside class time, including the week-ends the students do not go home. A very important staff member is the capable lunchroom manager who plans the well-balanced meals with the foremost thought that a blind boy or girl needs a healthy body, nurtured by good foods.

During the 1965-66 school session, 176 students were enrolled. Of the total enrollment, 44 had no light perception, while 132 had light perception or better; 119 are Braille students, 19 are large print students, and 38 can read both Braille and large print. This last group consists of students who will perhaps lose their vision later and have learned Braille to prepare for this possibility.

The operation of the school cost approximately \$1,650 per student for 180 pupils in the biennium 1965-67. According to Table IV Residential School Statistics compiled by the American Association of Instructors of the Blind Statistics and Salary Survey for 1965-66, this figure is quite low when compared with other Southern states, as follows:

<u>State</u>	<u>Per Capita</u>	<u>Pupils</u>
Alabama	\$ 1,800	219
Arkansas	2,390	173
Florida	2,180	230
Georgia	2,675	203
Kentucky	2,340	151
Tennessee	2,820	216
MISSISSIPPI	1,650	180

Junior High School Goals

In addition to the regular curriculum of the Junior High schools, a special effort is made to prepare the students for the adequate knowledge of Braille, functional music and homemaking, training stated in the five years of this level that Braille is mastered by most of the students.

High School

Sixteen units are required for graduation, twelve of these being academic units, and four being elective units.

Books in large print and Braille for the schools are published by the American Printing House for the Blind, Louisville, Kentucky. The contents of the large print and Braille books correspond with the state-adopted textbooks used in all levels of the public schools.

Library and English

Library standards established by the Mississippi Accreditation Commission are also applicable to the School for the Blind. However, in order to offer library service to all children, it is necessary to provide library material in print, large type, Braille, and talking book form. The library provides meaningful and current material in all of the Dewey Decimal classifications. The library is centrally located, and the students have access to the entire collection of over 900 titles.

The professional librarian stimulates and guides the pupils on an individual basis, seeking always to extend and enrich classroom experiences and help them happily explore the world of books.

High school and junior high school English courses emphasize listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with special emphasis on grammar, speaking, building vocabulary, and outlining. Both American and English literature is taught with outside reading and creative writing required on a limited basis. Since listening and speaking correctly are most important to the visually handicapped child, skills in this area are stressed.

Social Studies

Of the twelve required academic units for graduation, three must be in the social studies department. All students are required to take one unit of American History, one unit of World History, one-half unit of Mississippi History, and one-half unit of American Government between the ninth and twelfth grades. Elective courses of civics, economics and world geography of one-half unit each are offered to complete a comprehensive social studies program.

The social studies department is equipped with specially designed course maps and globes as well as the standard textbooks in both large print and Braille.

The general objectives of the department are to give the children a working knowledge of World, United States and Mississippi history; to aid in the students' understanding of the function and activities of the government; to provide them with a sound grasp of the history of the state and nation; to give them a clear understanding of the principles of government; to give them a clear understanding of the principles of government; to give them a clear understanding of the principles of government.

Mathematics

Mathematics at the Mississippi School for the Blind is departmentalized in grades 5-12. Beginning in the fifth grade, each student learns to work with the cranmer abacus, which is designed to enable blind students to do, with ease, calculations that are very difficult to do in Braille.

The mathematics program stresses the understanding and skills involved in the working of practical problems that would be encountered in daily living. Modern algebra is offered to the high school students, as well as a one unit course in general mathematics.

Commercial

The aim in the commercial classes is to provide the student with a skill which would make his personal business transactions more convenient, as well as lead to possible vocational opportunities.

Typing and dictation are taught in grades 8-12. The student in typewriting learns to identify and use the parts of the machine, to change the ribbon, and to type with a smooth, even touch. After the student has learned the keyboard and developed typing controls, emphasis is placed on letter writing. Various types of business letters are studied and dictated to the students, in order to increase his proficiency at taking machine dictation.

A medical transcription course has been introduced, as part of a general business course, which is designed to interest capable students in pursuing further training in this field upon graduation.

Homemaking

Vocational homemaking begins in the ninth grade, continuing through three years of high school with three credits given for work completed in child care and guidance, clothing and textiles, family health and home nursing, family relationship, food and nutrition, housing and home management, developing home crafts, family spending, and planning for the future. The department emphasizes keeping the home clean and attractive, personal cleanliness, manners and etiquette, and care of children. Thorough instruction is given in planning, cooking, and serving balanced meals. The students also receive training in preparing and serving teas, luncheons and dinners. This course is designed to prepare the girls for the duties of homemaking, to train them for the cultural demands of the community, as well as for earning a living.

Industrial Arts and Crafts

The primary objective of Industrial Arts at the School for the Blind is to acquaint each student with as many areas of industry as possible during their four years of high school.

Beginning in the eighth grade, students construct one project in leather, electricity, metal, wood and plastics. They are also given instruction in the

